

which has the shell and the anterior part of the body with penis, will provide much-needed anatomical information and unequivocally link this with the name, bringing stability to the identity and nomenclature of the taxon. The specimen is from the putative type locality of Étang du Prévost, near Palavas-les-Flots, Hérault, France.

Additional references

- Mars, P. 1966. Recherches sur quelques étangs du littoral méditerranéen français et sur leur faunes malacologiques. *Vie Milieu Suppl.*, 20: 1–359.
- Paladilhe, A. 1870. Étude monographique sur les Paludiniées françaises. *Annales de Malacologie*, 1: 167–243.
- Paladilhe, A. 1874. Monographie de nouveau genre *Peringia*, suivie des descriptions d'espèces nouvelles de Paludiniées françaises. *Annales des Sciences Naturelles*, (6, Zoologie et Paléontologie), 1: 1–38.

Comments on the proposed precedence of the specific name of *Crotalus ruber* Cope, 1892 over that of *Crotalus exsul* Garman, 1884 (Reptilia, Serpentes)

(Case 3005; see BZN 55: 229–232)

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I write to support the application by Prof Hobart M. Smith and his co-authors to conserve the name *Crotalus ruber* Cope, 1892 by giving it precedence over *C. exsul* Garman, 1884 when the two taxa are considered to be conspecific. In my 1992 paper I may have inadvertently suggested the opposite (para. 3 of the application), but I believe that the proposal of Smith et al. is far better for the maintenance of nomenclatural stability in herpetology.

(2) R. Earl Olson

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It is my view that the authors of the application should be supported in their proposal. The name *Crotalus ruber* has not only been used for a lengthy time but, since it refers to a venomous snake, it is involved in many medical and preventative materials. The removal of the name, and replacement with *C. exsul*, when the two taxa are treated as conspecific would bring about undue confusion, especially in non-herpetological circles.

(3) Wilmer W. Tanner

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I request that the Commission consider favorably the proposal to give the species name *Crotalus ruber* Cope precedence over *C. exsul* Garman if the two taxa are considered to be conspecific. Loss of the name *C. ruber* would not aid in a better understanding of *Crotalus* systematics, and would also result in a considerable curatorial problem throughout museum collections.

(4) Robert W. Murphy

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Smith et al. have argued lucidly for the conservation of the well known name *Crotalus ruber* Cope, 1892 for the red diamondback rattlesnake by giving it precedence over the less frequently used name *C. exsul* Garman, 1884. I give their application my full support.

Approval of the application is essential for maintaining a stable nomenclature, which is particularly critical for research and practice in medical sciences, legal protection and education. Although the literature is already becoming confused with inconsistent uses of the names (e.g. Wong, H., 1997, *Herpetological Review*, 28: 188–189), the period of confusion is likely to be brief. Van Denburgh (1922, *Occasional Papers of the California Academy of Science*, 10: 920) placed *C. ruber* in synonymy with *C. exsul* but this arrangement of names was not long perpetuated.

(5) Bayard H. Brattstrom

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I published on fossil pit-vipers, which included the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, in 1954.

I published data on rattlesnake skulls, including the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, in Klauber's classic two-volume work in 1956.

I published on the function of the lung in rattlesnakes, including the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, in 1959.

I published my Ph.D. thesis on the evolution of the pit-vipers, including the relationship of the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, to the other rattlesnakes, in 1964.

I published a large paper on the body temperature of reptiles, which included thermal data for the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, in 1965.

I published a chapter in *Herpetology of the North American deserts* on the social behavior and habitat requirements of desert reptiles, which included information on the red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*, in 1994.

I published a paper on forensic herpetology, involving an attempted murder by using a rattlesnake, in 1998. In the study we used a red rattlesnake, *Crotalus ruber*.

Thus, within my scientific career I, myself, have included information on the red rattlesnake using the name *Crotalus ruber* in papers on anatomy, paleontology, ecology, behavior, forensics, thermophysiology and conservation. The name *Crotalus ruber* is clearly well established in the literature of many different fields. I urge that stability of the nomenclature be maintained and that the name *C. ruber* be given precedence over *C. exsul* if the two taxa are regarded as synonyms.

(6) Support for the application has also been received from Dr Aurelio Ramirez-Bautista and Dr Julio Lemos Espinal (*Unidad de Biología, Tecnología, y Prototipos (UBIPRO), Unam. Av. de los Barrios s/n, Los Reyes Ixtacala, Tlalnepantla, estado de Méx. C.P. 54090, A.P. 314, Mexico*).